



For Your Information

Foster care payments to licensed foster parents

BACKGROUND

Foster care is designed to be a temporary living situation for children who have been removed from their homes due to abuse, neglect or abandonment. Foster parents take children into their homes and hearts, creating a safe and secure place for children to live and grow. Thousands of children in this state are living better lives today because of the dedication of their foster parents. The Department honors and appreciates the essential and invaluable work done for the children in the state's care by foster parents.

FOSTER CARE RATES FOR LICENSED FOSTER PARENTS

In Washington, licensed foster parents are not paid a salary; instead they receive a foster care payment to meet the basic needs of the child, such as food, clothing, shelter, and personal incidentals; as well as to provide for costs associated with caring for a foster child with special needs.

The basic foster care maintenance rates consider the age and level of needs a child may have. The Level I basic rate, based on the age of the child, ranges from \$423.68 to \$575.30 per month. DSHS Children's Administration assesses each foster child's specific needs and the efforts of the child's foster parent in meeting those needs, which may raise the assessment to Levels 2, 3 or 4, increasing the rate to a higher level. For example: a medically-fragile foster child may require a higher level of care than a healthy child because it takes more time and effort to meet the child's needs. Level 2 through 4 rates range from \$601.61 to \$1,377.60 per month.

In addition to the foster care maintenance payment, DSHS Children's Administration pays separately for some transportation costs incurred by the foster parent, basic clothing expenses of the child, direct services such as medical and dental assistance, therapeutic services, educational supports, and childcare expenses when both foster parents work outside the home.

FOSTER CARE PAYMENTS (total funds):

- ∞ Average monthly number of children in licensed foster care in state fiscal year 2010: **5,875**
- ∞ Fiscal year 2010 average monthly foster care maintenance rate: **\$ 839.71**
- ∞ Fiscal year 2010 expenditures for foster care maintenance payments: **\$ 53.591 million**
- ∞ Fiscal year 2010 expenditures paid in addition to maintenance payments: **\$ 19.058 million**
 - (includes Ancillary services/transportation for licensed foster care and some paid to unlicensed relatives, clothing/support goods for foster children, liability reimbursement, respite, behavioral rehabilitative services [IV-E expenditures, includes group homes])
- ∞ **Fiscal year 2010 paid for foster care maintenance and additional costs:** **\$ 72.649 million**

Governor Gregoire made it a priority in the proposed 2011-13 biennial budget to maintain a safety net for abused and neglected children, and she worked diligently to minimize the impact of the budget reductions on children involved in the child welfare system. The Governor's proposed biennial budget restores a number of items that had been scheduled for reduction in the Early Savings 2011 Supplemental Budget (HB 3225) and the Governor's proposed 2011 Supplemental budget. These include foster care maintenance payments, foster care transportation, foster care support goods and services, foster care support child aide, and foster parent support.